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librarians of the Bodleian collection, will enrich this tenth and last division.

Such is the 'Prospectus' of the *Bibliographical Decameron*. It remains to make an observation of no small importance to the welfare of the work. Every candid and reflecting reader must allow, that, in the conduct of such a performance, consistently with the plan above laid down, which is intended to be rigidly carried into effect—it will demand no trifling support in the shape of *pecuniary resources*. Nearly *one thousand pounds* have been already devoted to the decorations alone: but to complete the plan, *another thousand* will be essentially requisite. For this I purpose making an appeal to the liberality of my subscribers; and as the work is published entirely at my own expense, to solicit for the first time, the contribution of one third of the subscription price.

Upon the maturest consideration, and making due allowance for a calculation which cannot embrace a few unforeseen contingencies, I do not imagine that these two volumes, printed in the best manner of the *Shakespeare Press*, in a small delicate type, upon paper of unusually fine substance, nearly the whole of which has been already manufactured for the work—enriched with scarcely less than *three hundred embellishments*, and comprehending at least 1000 pages, can be published at a price below that which the reader has probably before noticed; nor shall they exceed 7*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* to the subscriber.

The work will be dedicated, by permission, to his Grace the *Duke of Devonshire*; and I pledge myself *it shall never be re-printed*; as far as I have the power of carrying such pledge into effect.

Yours, &c.

T. F. DIBDIN.

#### TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,

You have given in your last number some extracts from a work printed at Breslau, entitled *Biographie Moderne*, which is at the Athenæum. In the twenty-seventh number of the *Edinburgh Review*, there is an article of considerable extent, said to have been written by Mr. Walsh, on a work with the same title, printed at Leipsic; it may be

interesting to some of your readers to consult this Review. As the work at the Athenæum is a second edition, it is probable, that these absurd accounts of American characters were not contained in the Leipsic edition, or they would have been noticed by Mr. Walsh; if the article was written by him. It is rendering a publick service to denounce books of this kind. What idea would be formed by a German of some of the most eminent characters in our country from perusing such a work. If a correspondence could be established between literary men of different countries, some check might be given to the circulation of calumny, by instantly denouncing to each other, every work that should contain it.

P. O.

#### FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN JOURNAL.

There have been lately received at the Athenæum, the transactions of the French Institute for the years 1813 and 1814, of which we will attempt to give a slight account. The analysis of the labours of the class of the mathematical and physical class is made by *M. Delambre*. It commences by noticing the publication of *la mécanique analytique* of the *Count de Lagrange*, whose death happened while the second volume was printing. The great loss sustained by science in this event is deplored, and the hope encouraged that the influence of his writings will raise up others to complete them. This hope is justified by an allusion to one of the first works of Lagrange, the calculation of *probabilities*, on which the last year a perfect treatise had been given by the *Count de la Place*; and who has lately applied his theory to one of the most difficult questions suggested by physical astronomy; the origin of comets and the nature of their orbits. Some account of this paper then follows. Its hypothesis is founded on a suggestion of Herschel relative to the origin of comets, which resembles much the doctrine of the ancients on this subject; and which *M. Delambre* thinks will tend to diminish greatly the importance of these bodies, if it should prove to be well founded. The next paper mentioned is a memoir of *M. Burckhardt* on the masses of the planets, and another of the same, on some of the equations in the theory of Jupiter; these are followed by an abstract of a second memoir by *M. Poisson* of the distribution of elec-